

STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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A TRAINING STRATEGY FOR SENIOR CHAPLAINS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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The Chief of Chaplains is responsible for training all chaplains. So far the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School has a strategy for training chaplains to function at the tactical and operational levels of the Army. The Chaplain Corps has not yet developed a training strategy for those chaplains who will serve in the strategic level of the Army and the Department of Defense. This research project offers a possible training strategy (ends, ways, means) for senior chaplains.

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OVERVIEW

I am a chaplain. I wanted to do research on an issue that would be beneficial to The Army Chaplain Corps. I sent an e-mail to the Office of the Chief of Chaplains asking if there is some particular issue they wanted researched. After the staff looked at my request, the Army Chaplain Center and School suggested that I do research on developing a training strategy for senior chaplain leaders.

The Director of Training, Chaplain (COL) Kenneth Leinwand, framed the issue in this way: "We have not, as a branch, identified the skills, knowledge and tasks that a senior chaplain needs to possess."¹ The Branch has identified the skills, knowledge and tasks for chaplains at the tactical and operational levels. It has not, so far, identified what is required at the strategic level, viz., MACOM, Joint Command, and Department of the Army Chaplain positions.

In the course of this research I learned the following lessons:

1. The strategic level of the organization is a complex and ambiguous environment. Precise and final outputs of work are not always possible. One is forced to live for a time with ambiguity before solutions begin to be possible.
2. The strategic level demands collaboration with others in order to accomplish work. No one person can have all the knowledge

and expertise to deal with issues at that level without the help of others.

3. The strategic level will create a different stress on individuals who come to it from the operational level of the organization. Certainly there is stress at the organizational level. That stress is mostly external, the constraints of time and resources to finish a product like an operations order or a budget. At the strategic level the stress is internal. Often there is no particular product. There are issues, discussions, research, negotiation, consensus building.
4. All the tasks which must be done in a particular role within the organization do not equal the complete role. In other words, more is required of individuals within roles than mere output of work. The work must be to a standard which is equal to the interest level of the commander.
5. The Army can develop individuals through institutional schools, Branch and unit training and it can train individuals by having them actually perform work in a series of assignments. But there is a marked and individual difference between occupying a role by virtue of rank and the actual capacity to fill the role.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

When we begin to talk about a training strategy for senior leaders in the chaplaincy we need to make some distinctions from

the outset. We must define 'strategy.' We need to distinguish 'training' from 'development.'

Development is a process of providing individuals with the experiences, values, wisdom, skills and knowledge necessary to function in a variety of roles at a given organizational level. Development prepares the individual to undertake work at the same or at a higher level in the organization.

Training is a process of helping an individual enhance their skills in the use of knowledge through practice. Training helps individuals to perform tasks in a given role.²

A strategy is made up of ends, ways and means.³ In a training strategy the ends are the training objectives (ends), the ways are the training concepts and the means are the training resources available along the way. Any training strategy should identify the ends or goals of the training and it should produce some courses of action and identify some resources to use along the way.⁴

The Army has a training strategy for leaders in the lower echelons of the organization. The end of this strategy is to produce individuals who are proficient at performing certain critical tasks at various work levels in the organization.

A weakness of this strategy is that you cannot totally identify a work role with the tasks required for that role. There is a way to accomplish the tasks. This is a standard. At lower levels in the organization, soldiers perform relatively

simple tasks or drills. As individual soldiers move up to more complex levels of the organization, more is required. This 'something more' is the various mental abilities, skills, and knowledge the individuals who perform the tasks need. Some of these abilities might be inborn, but the system cannot rely solely upon native talent. It needs to impart at least 'something more' to individuals in order for them to perform the more complex tasks. The Army has recognized this and has turned to a competency based design to augment its task approach. The design attempts to identify certain core skills, knowledge and attributes which are crucial to the effective performance of the critical skills.⁵

The Army has a system of institutional training, Branch training and unit training. This 'training' actually is an equivocation. Some parts of the training are actually development (competencies) and other parts of the training are really practice in the use of knowledge to enhance skill. For example, chaplains learn in the basic course how to develop a religious support annex. This is development. They actually train in the use of the annex when they go with their unit to the National Training Center. Here they take the basic knowledge and skill they received in school and apply it over and over again in actual situations thus enhancing their skill at doing it.

If the end of the strategy is to make soldiers more proficient at performing skills with certain core competencies,

then we can say that we have a training strategy which produces an end state. But we must recognize that the quality of that end state cannot be controlled. This is because individuals will arrive at the end state with greater ability or less ability to perform tasks depending on their capacity to learn.

We must apply the same model to a strategy for training senior leader chaplains. We must determine what the end state should be, we must lay out some courses of action (training concepts) to arrive at the end state and we need to identify some means that will be necessary along the way.

Chaplains at senior levels in the organization need to perform tasks. We can identify what those tasks might be. We can identify some core competencies which are necessary in order to accomplish those tasks and, of course, we can identify some of the resources that are available along the way.

Just like the tactical and operational levels, we will arrive at an end state, but we cannot determine or predict the quality of that end state. Because, if the role is characterized by complexity and an ambiguous working environment (as we shall see), the role becomes more important than the individual tasks. In fact, it is the way in which the role is exercised that determines the culture, values and vision of the whole organization. One could say that at the senior most levels of the organization the task is really the exercise of the role.

The exercise of the role of senior leader is qualitatively different than just doing tasks.⁶

We cannot develop a strategy which will give us such persons. Yet we can develop a strategy which will make it possible for such a person or persons to emerge.

This paper will contrast the organizational work roles and the strategic work roles of chaplain senior leaders to determine what they perform and how they perform tasks. Finally it will be necessary to fully describe the totality of senior chaplain leader role and the complexity of the work at that level in order to produce a training strategy which both develops and enhances skills in the use of knowledge.

OPERATIONAL LEVEL

All organizations exists to get work done, to create an output which is either a product or a service. This output is constrained by time, resources and other external limits.⁷ The complexity of the work is a function of the problems to be solved and the information processing capability.⁸

Chaplains at the organizational level work at tasks which produce outputs. Brigade chaplains, for instance, train and supervise battalion chaplains, develop and coordinate resourcing for the ministry of the brigade, develop annexes for the delivery of religious support in operations. Division chaplains train and supervise brigade chaplains, provide assessments of religious

needs of the division to the commander, acts as principle staff officer within the division for the providing and direction of religious support.

The brigade chaplain and the division chaplain are roles within the organization to accomplish work. How they do their tasks in a specific role is a function of the competencies they bring to the role. The chaplaincy has prepared them for these roles through institutional development, unit training and a variety of assignment experiences for these roles.

They have the knowledge, skills and attributes required for that level of the organization. It is by using these competencies that they accomplish work by solving problems and using information.

The knowledge they bring to the task includes facts pertinent to the issue, knowledge of the culture of the organization and their own personal adherence to these corporate values. The skills they brings are a way of doing things. That is, procedures, models, formulas, ways of getting work done in the system. The attributes they bring are sound judgment and at least the ability to work with others in a productive and harmonious way.⁹

The content of issues is of various complexity. Each issue will call for the role-player to identify what is required, gather the pertinent information, perform an analysis, come to

conclusions, develop alternative courses of action, come to a decision and enlist others to follow his/her direction.¹⁰

The ability or capacity to come to a particular output or even a suitable output will depend upon the individual's capacity to work at that level. But all the previous development and training in the tasks cannot impart to the individual the capacity to perform work at that level. The chaplaincy can train individuals to perform tasks, but it cannot train how they will function in roles.

This accounts for the fact that some individuals are more successful in roles than others. Part of the explanation for this is that some individuals are able to get more information, are able to process it better and are able to come to better conclusions and courses of action than others. They are able to produce an output of work which is consistent with the level of the boss's interest.¹¹ For instance, the division commander is not so much interested in the time for a specific religious service. He is more interested that during the course of the operation, religious ministry will be performed across the battlespace according to the various needs of the soldiers engaged in the operation.

STRATEGIC LEVEL

Tasks are an important element of any role. Certainly tasks are important at the strategic level. Any training strategy for

senior chaplains will have to define those critical tasks which senior chaplains in MEL1 positions will need to do. Usually this is done by convening a board of experts who define the critical tasks. It is not in the scope of this paper to define all the critical tasks for chaplains at senior levels. We can get some idea of the tasks and their complexity by looking at what some senior chaplains have had to do.

Chaplain (COL) John W. Brinsfield, Jr., a member of the War College faculty, in his new book, Encouraging Faith, Serving Soldiers, a History of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy, 1975-1995,¹² has written about some of the essential tasks which senior level chaplains need to perform. In the preparation for his book Chaplain Brinsfield conducted interviews with those chaplains who were involved in OPERATION JUST CAUSE, URGENT FURY, RESTORE HOPE, DESERT SHIELD/STORM. By looking at what these individuals had to do in the course of operations, we can make a list of some of the essential tasks which chaplains at senior levels must perform.

DEPARTMENT OF ARMY LEVEL

- Monitor for possible contingencies
- Track deployments
- Check adequacy of mobilization plans
- Check coverage plans for religious ministry
- Cross leveling
- Backfill requirements
- Orient on the needs of sustaining installations¹³

MAJOR COMMAND HEADQUARTERS

- Management of religious resources to include personnel to ensure trained UMTs¹⁴ for deployment¹⁵
- Coordinate with ARFOR¹⁶ Main for policy, procedures, personnel and logistical support.¹⁷

JOINT COMMAND CHAPLAIN

- Monitor, coordinate and maintain liaison with senior component and supporting command chaplains and helps resolve issues related to the readiness and delivery of ministry associated with US soldiers serving in Joint Command.¹⁸
- Review contingency plans for religious support, resolving conflict between Joint Command regulations and other services' regulations regarding religious support¹⁹
- Write policy for Joint commander covering all matters which deal with providing religious support to US Joint personnel and specifically providing guidance for the conduct of ministry during the operation in the host country.²⁰

SUPPORTING JOINT COMMAND CHAPLAINS

- Develop situational awareness to collect critical religious support data.
- Anticipate deployments
- War planning: personnel, resupply, training, family support and policy requirements²¹

It is the level of uncertainty and complexity in dealing with these tasks that set them apart from the operational level tasks of the organization.²² It is the competencies that chaplains bring to work at this level that ultimately set the culture, values and purpose of the whole organization. At the senior level, the way something is done is as important as the product. The way of going about task completion is again using core competencies.

Senior leaders need to have and use knowledge. But not all the knowledge they will need will come from their development. They must be able to generate knowledge in an environment which is uncertain, imprecise and changing. They must be open to new information and information which is unfamiliar to them from different sources. They must be able to determine what facts are

valuable and what are not. They must be able to perform analyses, come to conclusions and develop courses of action which are never definitive, but ongoing. They do not solve problems so much as manage them.²³ That is, they move them along in a certain direction and remain flexible as time and more information comes in.

The exercise of certain core skills set the tone for the whole organization. First, the senior leader needs the ability to conceptualize,²⁴ to generalize apart from concrete situations. In this way one can sift out all the accidental manifestations to the central core of something. This is extremely important in a joint operation. The senior leader must be able to sift through the various ways the other services perform ministry to find the common element that all can agree upon and do.

A second skill is the ability work with others in a harmonious and courteous way by negotiation or consensus building.²⁵ When working with peers, a leader must build consensus. "Peers will not respond to orders."²⁶ Orders only alienate them and make it more difficult in the long run to reach the desired end state. Whereas consensus and negotiation build commitment to an end state which will guide the organization beyond the tenure of the incumbent.

Third, strategic leaders must be creative.²⁷ Often there is no policy, template, model or system of accomplish an end. Just such a situation developed during Desert Storm. The symbols and

performance of Christian and Jewish worship became one of the issues in developing the coalition among Muslims and especially in the host nation of Saudi Arabia. The work required was a policy which the commander to point to with coalition partners to assure them that they would not be offended or insulted by the performance of other religions. This problem had not come up even theoretically in training and it certainly had no answer in the realm of organizational policy.²⁸

Creativity demanded that the policy be such that all the chaplains would agree to it and do it and that it would be at a level of the commander's interest. The commander wanted a policy to help the coalition he did not want an interfaith dialogue. But an interfaith dialogue was necessary in order to develop a policy.

Finally there is the need to be a human being,²⁹ certainly an important value for any organization. The Joint Staff Officers Guide 1997³⁰ calls this the nonquantifiable in decision making. That is a certain gut feeling or feel for the problem. A person becomes aware of it when the facts don't fit the truth, when there is a gap between the way things are and the way we want them to be. There is a human dimension in decision making which can never abrogate in favor of a computer. And there is the human elements of "law, morals, ethics, aesthetics, politics, culture and history."³¹ Any one of these or all of them can play an important part in a final decision.

Such a intensely human situation developed in the course of a war game. The enemy used a nuclear device in the course of the battle. Some, in reaction, wanted to follow the policy of retaliation in kind. The argument was that if we allowed the enemy to think that they could strike with impunity then we would be open to further strikes of nuclear weapons. Others argued that blind following of policy would not produce the optimum result. Such a course of action could trigger nuclear war. Further, a nation could take the moral high ground and place the burden of explanation to the world community on the perpetrator. Senior strategic leaders are not slavish followers of policy; they are responsible for the end state which policy is only a means.

Again we are confronted with the conclusion that the chaplaincy can prepare soldiers for roles at senior levels and it can impart the competencies to accomplish these roles. Yet it is the individuals capacity to deal in that environment that will determine whether he can produce the outputs or measure up the full totality of the role which is beyond the total of all the tasks.

CONCLUSIONS

1. THE CHAPLAINCY DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH SPACES TO ADEQUATELY DEVELOP CHAPLAINS FOR SENIOR ROLES.

If the step between the operational and the strategic level of leader is qualitative, the chaplaincy does not have the positions to adequately develop its chaplains for senior leadership. Chaplains have the competence to think critically and produce analyses by virtue of their graduate level education and professional experience in ministry. They do not have many positions within the Army Chaplaincy to deal with issues of religious leadership to the organization at senior most levels.

My own case might serve as an illustration of this point. When I was a major I was assigned to the Chief of Chaplain's office. My particular duty was to recruit chaplains for the army. My exposure was more than my duty. My colleagues in the office were working staff issues of religious leadership for the whole army and some with the whole Department of Defense.

I was struck first by the organization. They organized so as to be able to respond and interface with their counterparts in the Army Staff. I saw how much of their time was taken up with reacting to other staff positions, doing research, developing arguments for and against positions.

Secondly, I was amazed that things just went on and on. Just when they finished one action, someone would make another assumption and they would be off again looking and the results of

that position and determining the second and third order effects. Issues rarely came to final closure. Each conclusion was only another start point.

The staff worked above the operational level of the chaplaincy. Many times the Chief of Chaplains Office receives criticism from the field for not caring about the work of the chaplains in the field. But I found out that the office worked above the operational level. It worked on issues of policy, structure, values, resources: ways and means needed so that direct ministry could take place.

And since many chaplains have not had the opportunity for development at senior most levels, their thinking and analyses will continue to be at the operational level of the organization. It is easy and comfortable to go to their comfort level, the operational level, viz., provide direct ministry to a person or a congregation or unit. It is extremely difficult to hold oneself above that and work on issues which determine whether a battle can be fought or ministry can be provided.

2. A chaplain 'functional' course will not provide the kind of training needed for chaplains to function at the strategic level.

Here I mean 'training' in the sense of practice in the use of knowledge. Not using knowledge in a classroom, but using knowledge in a setting which replicates as much as possible the actual conditions under which the task must be performed. That

is "tough, demanding, realistic training relentlessly executed to uncompromising standards."³²

A functional course at the Chaplain School attended by Army chaplains will not train chaplains to the correct standard. If the strategic level is characterized by its complexity and ambiguity, then the training should be to that standard. I do not believe that a Army school environment can generate that kind of environment to produce a realistic experience of senior leadership practice.

Suppose for example that chaplains train in the function course to "maintain liaison with senior component and supporting command chaplains to resolve issues related to the readiness and delivery of ministries associated with US Joint personnel." No doubt they would go to the publication Religious Ministry in Support of Joint Operations.³³ They could produce an annex for a hypothetical joint operation.

Yet such a product would not be at the strategic level or interest of the commander of the Joint Operation. He would want to know if the other components are 'joined' in the operation. It is one thing to put down on a piece of paper what the religious ministry would look like in the joint operation and it is quite another to actually get agreement from all the other services about how this will occur.

That is because each of the Services has their own culture and their own system of operating. The final product will have

to be the result of negotiation and compromise and consensus between senior component and supporting chaplains. The result will also be consistent with the rest of the Joint environment.

The Joint Force Commander will not intervene in the component commander's Service organization's policy, regulations and standard operating procedures in order to bring them into conformity with his own Service's. Yet he expects his component commander(s) to support the mission of the joint force. The same is true of the Chaplaincy. An Army chaplain cannot 'green' component chaplains. But he can seek support from them to provide ministry to US personnel regardless of component across a wide spectrum of contingencies.

All of the chaplains will have to be involved because the process and the solution of a problem cannot be predicted. It must be worked on by everyone, each one being open to new information, being able to reflect together using concepts rather than depending upon past solutions.

If chaplains from other services were included in the functional course, then the training would be tough, realistic and battlefocused. Only a person of another service can represent that service. And by dealing with real and different kinds of chaplains, Army chaplains and others would be able to practice using knowledge in the strategic environment and by the process of critical thinking and consensus could produce a unique product.

Of course, we also have to consider that the solution might not be consistent with policy or culture. They might come to an impasse. But that is why there is a Center for Lessons Learned. These issues can be taken up to a higher level and worked so that solutions are possible in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

My first recommendation would be that any training strategy for senior Army chaplains should consist of two interrelated parts. The first component is to train tasks to be performed at the strategic level of the organization. The second would be to train those tasks at a level of complexity which replicates the actual environment where the tasks will be performed.

Secondly, the means I would recommend for this task would be the Center for Strategic Leadership at Carlisle Barracks, PA. Both components could be brought together here. The mission of the Center is to provide training to strategic leaders. During the academic year for War College resident students (all Services, Government Civilians and foreign officers), the Center conducts a two week exercise. Students play roles of strategic leaders in the organization as well as staff officers. The fast-paced tempo, as well as players from other agencies of the government, create a complex environment. Players are forced to interrelate with other services, other agencies and even other branches of government on issues of policy and overall strategy for dealing with realistic contingencies around the world and at home.

The Center could develop a training exercise for senior Army chaplains. An exercise would replicate the Chief of Chaplains' Office, MACOM Chaplains and staffs as well as joint Command and Component chaplains and staff working off a series of scenarios.

Duty positions could be changed in the course of the exercise so that chaplains get maximum opportunity to experience the levels of complexity throughout the organization. Chaplains would have the experience of dealing with content that relates to the chaplain branch at the senior level.

Two other valuable components of the exercise would be the after action reviews and visits of senior leaders from the field.

The after action review gives the players an opportunity to step back from the content of the exercise and to focus on their own learning. They have the opportunity to experience what the environment is like and what the issues are. They get an idea of how well they can handle that kind of role.

I spoke earlier that chaplains do not have much opportunity to see work at senior levels of the Chaplaincy because there just are not that many positions. The visits of senior leader chaplains from the field during the exercise gives the players and opportunity to relate to actual role occupants as they work on the issues. In a small branch like the Chaplain Corps this is a good way to mentor future leaders and for senior leaders to get a good idea of future role occupants.

Finally, if the exercise at the Center for Strategic Leadership is not possible, I recommend that the Army Chaplain Corps approach the other Services to develop a joint senior chaplain training at strategic level. Training in a functional course with only Army chaplains would lack the element of

realistic and tough training. Students might recognize that their could be problems working with chaplains of other services. The presence of real component chaplains of equal rank and experience level would introduce a realism which cannot be replicated in any other way. Real component chaplains would challenge the Army's way of doing ministry, introduce new facts and assumptions into the business of providing ministry. This by itself would create complexity and call for tough thinking and negotiation which might result in some unique solutions. If one is going to gain proficiency in using critical thinking and consensus building at senior levels then it ought to be done under the right conditions.

SUMMARY

The Army needs strategic religious leaders at the senior most levels not only to provide for the religious needs of soldiers and families, but to be part of the development of National Security Strategy at the highest levels of government. The challenge for the Corps is to develop and train chaplains to step into those roles.

The Chief of Chaplains tells us this is a "Journey not a Destination."³⁴ Just as the 'journey' of our tactical and operational level chaplains is as tough and realistic as possible, so must our training for senior level chaplains be as well.

ENDNOTES

¹ Kenneth Leinwand <leinwand@usachcs-emh1.army.mil> "SRP" electronic mail message to Charles Gunti <guntic@carlisle-emh2.army.mil>, 5 September 1997.

² Stephen D. Clement, Ph.D., An Analysis of Existing Training Strategy, a study done for the Army Chief of Chaplains. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, October 1993), 40.

³ Colonel Arthur F. Lykke, Jr., USA Retired, Military Strategy: Theory and Application (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1993), 3.

⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Greg Wayne Hill, Chaplain Training Strategy, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1997), 3.

⁵ Clement, 2-4.

FM 22-100 [DRAFT], (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1994), 5-1.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Clement, 7.

⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁹ Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁰ Based on a model of Critical Thinking by Herbert Barber, in Advanced Course, 123 "Critical Thinking," (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1996)

¹¹ Clement, 33.

¹² John W. Brinsfield, Jr., Encouraging Faith, Serving Soldiers, a History of the Army Chaplaincy 1975-1995, (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1977)

¹³ Ibid., "key leaders had been planning and training for almost a year for an eventual Mideast mission." Part II, 45.

¹⁴ Unit Ministry Teams

¹⁵ Ibid., Part II, 199.

¹⁶ Army Force

¹⁷ Ibid., Part II, 50.

¹⁸ Ibid., Part II, 255.

¹⁹ Ibid., Part II, 60.

²⁰ Ibid., Part II, 57.

²¹ Ibid., Part II, 55.

²² FM22-100, 6-1.

²³ Ibid., 5-5.

²⁴ Ibid., 5-3.

²⁵ Clement., 22.

²⁶ FM 22-100, 5-11.

Margaret Wheatley, Leadership and the New Science: Learning about organizations from an Orderly Universe (San Francisco, CA:

Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1992), 144. Wheatley slants leadership toward relationships where others are empowered and there is a sense of fellowship.

Peter M. Senge, The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of the Learning Organization (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 1990), 239. Senge points to a learning organization as a place where dialogue happens. "A special conversation that begins to have a 'life of it's own;' taking us in directions we could never have imagined nor planned in advance." One of the requirements of dialogue is that all participants are treated as equals.

²⁷ FM 22-100, 5-7.

²⁸ Brinsfield, 57-61.

²⁹ National Defense University, The Joint Officer's Guide 1997, (Norfolk, VA: Joint and Combined Staff Officer School, 1997), 3-14.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² General Carl E. Vuono, "Training and the Army of the 1990s" Military Review (January-February 1997): 79.

³³ Joint Publication 1-05, Religious Ministry in Support of Joint Operations. Appendix B states that the lead for writing this publication was USCINCEUR. One can only wonder if the rest of the Services are wholeheartedly in agreement with this document.

³⁴ Department of the Army, Serving America's Army into the 21st Century [DRAFT], A White Paper (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, October 1994), 33.

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